

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lana Gordon at 3:30 P.M. on January 26, 2006 in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Tom Burroughs- Absent
Annie Kuether- excused

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Rena Jefferies, Revisor of Statutes
Helen Pedigo, Revisor of Statutes
Carlene Maag, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Keith Lawing, Executive Director, Workforce Alliance Board, South Central Kansas
Dr. Mary Sarah Fasenmyer, Former President of Local Region III WIA Board
Scott Anglemyer, Executive Director, Local Region III WIA Board

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairperson Gordon introduced Keith Lawing, Executive Director, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) is the Government's latest initiative to support job training and employment programs. WIA was implemented in Kansas July 1, 2000.

When planning for WIA began in South Central Kansas, local elected officials and business leaders felt it was an opportunity to make significant improvements to the public workforce system.

While the goals have changed over the years, the vision and mission of Workforce Alliance remain the same.

The vision for the future is a diversified, inclusive, highly skilled workforce functioning within a flexible, accessible system of education and economic development to advance the quality of life for our community.

The mission is to develop and lead a flexible, integrated workforce system that identifies and responds to our future community needs.

Currently four organizations operate the Workforce Centers, they include Butler County Community College, Cowley County Community College, the Kansas Department of Human Resources and the City of Wichita.

The workforce centers in El Dorado and Cowley County Community College developed a strong presence and are still recognized as effective community assets. The Wichita center struggled and maintained the stigma of being an "unemployment office".

Local Area IV did not meet performance in four of the eight measure in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in PY 2003. In PY 2004, six of the eight standards were met.

The Kansas 1st initiative was well received by the Workforce Alliance. Since Kansas Department of Commerce has stepped in to manage the WIA programs there has been significant improvement in the relationship between the state and local boards.

Workforce Alliance provides a more responsive workforce development system in South Central Kansas. The Workforce Alliance recently became the recognized operator of the WIA One-Stop System in Local Area IV and will now have a direct role in the management of the workforce centers in the region. (Attachment 1)

Dr. Mary Sarah Fasenmyer, former president of the Local Region III WIA Board gave a presentation on the

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challenges and problems Region III has faced. Region III is comprised of three counties; Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth. Johnson is a very affluent county, Wyandotte traditionally has the highest unemployment rate and Leavenworth is a government county. Region III is the smallest of the five regions, but has the largest population.

It was thought by the Board Members that they did not fully understand the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Department of Labor which described problems that needed to be addressed by Region III. (Attachment 2) It was through this communication, Region III was able to correct many of the problems. It is thought Region III has accomplished a lot and is now in compliance with many of the rules and regulations specified in WIA.

Scott Anglemeyer, Executive Director, Local Area III Workforce Investment Board gave an overview of the activities in Local Area III. Local Area III has the smallest geographic area of the state's five regions and the largest allocation of funds.

Since July 1 of last year, more than 10,000 people have used services either in person or online through Kansas Job Link. The board has 31 members, with business representing the majority on the board. When WIA was implemented in Area III, the board chose the Kansas Department of Human Resources (KDHR) as the fiscal agent.

The passage of WIA in 1998 signaled a fundamental shift in the nature of federal workforce development programs. Kansas was slow to accept the change, and Local Area III was slower than most other areas.

In recent program years, Local Area III has had some difficulty meeting performance standards on a set of 17 performance measures established by the US Department of Labor. Significant changes to the composition of the board has been made and are now in full compliance with board composition requirements.

Local Area III has contracted with the Older Kansas Employment Program (OKEP) to deliver job counseling and job search assistance to older job seekers. Area III has consistently served a higher percentage of older job seekers than any other area in the state.

Area III acknowledges that it has not always performed as well as it should. However, they have undergone changes necessary to transform the workforce development system in the Kansas City area into a system that helps businesses and individuals thrive. (Attachment 3)

Area III is would like to partner with businesses in Missouri. They would like to do things similarly to their counterpart on the Missouri side so that services could be offered for the people of Kansas on the Missouri side as well as offering services to the people of Missouri on the Kansas side.

Resources in the Kansas City area can form a workforce system that can contribute positively to what Kansas is doing.

In the discussion that followed this presentation, Mr. Anglemeyer did not think "Kansas 1st" was a good label to promote regionalism.

The meeting adjourned at 5 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006.